

Strange and Miraculous Acts from St. Omers:

Being an Account of the Wonderful Life and Death
of a Popish Saint and Martyr, named Mr. Edmund Gennings,
Priest, who was Executed for Treason some Years since: With a Relation
of the Miracles at, and after his Death.
Wherein may be observed, what Lying Wonders the Credulous Pa-
pists are made to believe, both against Sense and Reason.

Published by their own Copy, which was Printed by Authority at St. Omers.

For without are Dogs, and Sorcerers, and Whoremongers, and Murderers, and Idolaters, and
whosoever loveth and maketh a Lye: Revel. 21. 15.

IT is the peculiar Happiness of the Saints and Martyrs of the *Romish Church*, that though many of them live and dye Villains, Traytors, and Murderers, yet several strange and miraculous Things have been effected by their Relicks, and dead Bodies: And this their ignorant Lavery are bound to believe as firmly, as the Articles of their Faith. And such stuff has been imposed upon them, not only in the utter Darkness of *Papery*, when the *Mathematical Arts* were counted Conjuring, and a Bishop was burnt for affirming, There must needs be some such Countrey as *America*. But even to this day, they are made to believe the same Fooleries: For Mr. Dugdale in the Tryal of the late *Jesuits*, tells us, That Mr. Gaden having used many Arguments, by abusing Scripture, to demonstrate the Lawfulness of Killing Kings, or any others, who should be a hindrance to the Advancing their Cause: He added this; That the Relicks of *F. Garner*, one of the *Gun-Powder Traytors*, who was Executed for the same, at the West-End of *St. Pauls*, had wrought many Wonders and Miracles beyond Sea; which we may somewhat wonder at, since he was so long-tongued, as to acknowledge himself Guilty of that Horrid Design, which those of the same Faction have now the Impudence to deny.

Among the rest, we have met with the Life of a special Saint, who was Miraculous both Living and Dying; Printed by the Brethren at *St. Omers*, that Seminary of Treason and Rebellion, of which we shall give you a brief Account in their own Words. *Edmund Gennings*, alias *Ironmonger*, was born some where in *England*; and it is probable, had a Father as well as a Mother: But hear what our Author says of it.

I had thought to have declared at large, the Birth and Education of this our righteous happy Martyr, leaving the World to judge of his Miraculous Alteration; but for divers respects, Persecution forceth me to Silence at this time: And behold, *for the first*, at the very first I will not say a Miracle, yet at least a Wonder. For scarcely Nature cleaved his silly Corps from such Uncleanneſs as is brought (*a Magna Vilecia*) from his Mothers Bowels, but presently within an Hour or two, appeared a sign of his Magnanimity, and great Courage, which he was afterward to set forth to the View of the whole World; and this it was: The Mid wife, and other Women, having accomplished every thing belonging to their Office in the Birth of the Infant, the Nurse laid her down by the Fire, to give the Child his first Food; and directing her Dugg into its Mouth, he presently bit the same; at which unexpected pain, the simple Woman sent forth loud Shreiks and Cries; which she no sooner had done, but the Child bit her again: which unlooked Accident to berate the Nurse of all Patience, that she was ready to have done the Child some mischief, had not the Women, then accompanying her Mother, ran to succour him; who enquiring the Cause, they perceived the *Lamb* to have played the *tyrant*; and searching his Mouth, they found him to have a very fair Tooth in the Fore-part thereof; which strange Spectacle, worthily put them all into Admiration. And after a day or two, when the weak Mother had somewhat recovered Strength, they related to her the whole Matter which had hapned; who, what with Grief and Wonder, was so perplexed, as being not able to contain herself within the Limits of Temperate Motherhood, she brake forth into deep Passions.

At which time it chanced, that a Venerable old Man (a Doctor of Divinity) lodged in the House, a *Catholic* (as I my self have heard her say) who hearing and seeing what had hapned, and grieving for her Impatience, came in to Visit her, or rather, to Comfort and Content her. The Doctor was no sooner entred her Chamber, but she began to

relate the whole Discourse, as if he had known nothing thereof: which done, the grave Doctor began to use many Spiritual and Comfortable Words; and in the end, uttered (if I may so term it) these Prophetical Speeches: *Be of good Cheer* (said he) *your Son is and shall be very well: And concerning his Tooth, assure your self, it doth fore-tell, that he shall Travel further than the Queen bath any Land; and at the length, return again to the unspeakable Joy and Comfort of all that love him.*

These words of the Doctor were often Rehearsed in the hearing of many (long before his going over the Sea) by his Mother; the Effect of which saying, I leave the Indifferent Reader to consider, whether it be not altogether accomplished, and whether his Glorious Martyrdome, and great Courage in the same, (foreshewed by his Tooth,) was not a comfort to all that loved or favoured the Catholick cause; but let us return to our Infant, who until he was two years old, had the same Tooth in his Head; but then he lost it, and it vanished away without pain, trouble, or any advertisement.

And here, endeth the most wonderful, and remarkable History of the Miracle of the Fair Tooth, which doth certainly tend very much to the Comfort and Edification of the Ideots of the Infalible Church. But let us proceed, still in the Authors own words.

With no less Admiration may I report unto you his Admirable ripeness and Gravity even in his Infancy, who was never delighted with Childish plays; or any thing that might seem Toyish; No, he would never be inticed to play at any time with like Aged Children, but loved greatly to behold the Heavens; and therefore he usually went in the Evening, to delight himself with the sight of the Skies, bedecked with Stars; And on a time in these his tender years, going forth at night, according to his Custome, this strange Spectacle appeared to him in the Air; he saw, as it were, Armed men with Weapons, Killing and Murthring others that were Disarmed, and altogether destitute of like Furniture; and great store of blood, running every where about them: This strange sight, put the Child into a great fear, which caused him to run in hastily to tell his Mother, (being then a Widdow) what he had seen; and she presently went forth with three or four of her Neighbours, who that night had supped with her; and they were all Eye-witnesses of the same Spectacle. Thus much I my self have heard them Report, who also affirmed, that my self was then present; but being very young, I cannot remember it. This happened in the beginning of our Chiefest persecution, not long before the glorious death of Blessed Father Campian, and the rest.

Our Young Saint growing further in years, he became Page to a Catholick Gentleman, one Mr Richard Sherwood; This Gentleman at first, had a watchfull eye over his new Servant in all his Actions, because he knew all his Friends to be earnest Protestants; but in short time he found him so faithfull, that he began to deal with him touching Religion, and the Salvation of his Soul; and perceiving him Tractable, capable and willing to hear, he so far instructed him, that at length the youth earnestly desired to be Reconciled, and made a Member of the Catholick Church, from which he promised he would never serve. After a while, his Master being Resolved to forsake the Realm, and Turn Monk, he determined to place his man (now about Seventeen years of age) with some one of his Acquaintance, lest perhaps he should return, not without some danger of his Soul, to his own Friends, who were Protestants.

This his purpose he disclosed to his man Edmund, with good Counsel and perswasion, to remain firm in his Faith, and Religion: But when our Youth understood his Masters Resolution, he was much disturb'd at it, and desir'd his Master he might go with him; the good Gentleman, to try his Ability, told him, *It was impossible*; to which, Edmund replied, *Alas! and is it impossible! shall my Native Soyl restrain free-wil, or home-made Laws alter devout Resolutions? am I not young? cannot I study? May I not in time get what you have gotten? Learning for a Schollar, yea Virtue for a Priest perhaps, and so obtain that for which you are now ready.* His master unwilling to discourage him any longer, took him with him, and settled him at Rhims under Cardinal Allen.

Afterwards coming to twenty three years of Age, he was made Priest; where he imprinted in the Hearts of his Collegian Fellows, an everlasting memory of him, for his extraordinary pious and comely behaviour in Celebrating Mass at the Altar; and though he was by Nature affable and merry; yet before and after Mass, he was seldom or never seen, for the space of one whole hour to laugh, play, or spend any time in talk.

Long had not our Vertuous Priest been Invested with Holy Orders, but that Apostolical faculties were given him; and so with some others he was sent for England, and Landed at *Whisby* in *Yorkshire*, and from thence came to *London*; and the same night on which he came to the City, he repaired to a Catholicks House in *Holbourn*, where he

he found a very Virtuous and godly Priest: after some common Discourse, they began to Confer touching the Offering of the dreadful Sacrifice, where they might serve God together the next day, and say Mass; at length, they concluded to say their Mattins together, and Celebrate the next morning at Mr. *Swishen Wells* House in upper *Holbourn*; and being come together accordingly, behold, when he was even at the Consecration of the holy Body and Blood of our Saviour, one Mr. *Topclift*, with other Officers knockt at the Dore; which sudden noise struck fear and Terrour into the Hearts of all that were present; but the good Priests, with the rest, arose from their Devotions, and drawing out their Weapons (as St. *Peter* did to defend our Saviour) were ready at the Chamber dore when their Enemies had burst it open, bidding them stand, not suffering any one of them to enter till the Priest had finished his Mass; at which time, two that were at Mass, seeing the Officers would not stay, one of them threw Mr. *Topclift* down Stairs, while Mr. *Plasden* having appointed the rest to keep the Dore, went to the Altar, and bad the good Priest go forward without fear, and finish his Mass, to the greater glory of God and honour of all his Saints; and after returning to the door, he espied Mr. *Topclift* hastning up stairs with a broken head, and fearing he would have raised the whole street for help, the more to pacify him, seeing no means to escape, he told him that he should come in presently, and they would all yeild, which they did accordingly; for no sooner was the Mass ended, but he with the rest rushed in, and took Mr. *Gennings* and all the rest, Men and Women, with Church-stuff, Books, and Beads, and all they could find; They carried them all to *Newgate*, and were not ashamed to lead Mr. *Gennings* through the streets in his Priestly Veltments, to make him a laughing-stock to the beholders; and he, with about ten more were Committed close Prisoners to *Newgate*; and a while after were Indicted and Arraigned at the *Old Bayly* for High Treason; and here the Judges laughing at Mr. *Gennings* told him, he was more fit in his Priestly Attire to be presented to the Queen, for a jester, than to a Nun for a Confessor; moreover, they most slanderously affirmed, that it was Impossible for him (being a young man fair and fine, and as they termed him, frolick) not to break the Bands of Vowed Chastity, by being naught with those Beautiful young Women, with whom he had daily Converse; but he took all things patiently, knowing he Merited very highly thereby. To be brief, the Verdict was given up, and the Priests were all found guilty of High Treason, for returning into the Realm, contrary to the Law provided in that behalf; and Sentence of Death was pronounced against them, that they should all die at *Tyburn*, except Mr. *Gennings* and Mr. *Wells*, who were both to be Executed before Mr. *Wells* his own dore in *Grays-Inn-fields*. Then the Judges began to perswade them being Condemned by all means possible they could, to conform themselves to the present Protestant Religion, by going to their Churches and Service; but they affirmed stoutly, they would live and die in the Roman and Catholick Doctrine.

When the happy hour of his passion was come, the rest of the Prisoners Executed at *Tyburn*, and he was brought in a sled to the place appointed and being put upon the Ladder, many questions were asked him, he was a while after turned off the Ladder, and in a little time cut down; he was so sensible (*if it be not a lie*) when he was dismembred, that he cryed, *Oh it smarte*. Which Mr. *Wells* hearing, replied thus, *Alas sweet Soul, thy pain is great indeed, but almost past: pray for me now most Holy Saint, that mine may come*. He being ript up, and his bowels cast into the Fire, if we may believe the Hangman himself, and Hundreds of People standing by), the blessed Martyr uttered (his heart being in the Executioners hand) these words, *Sainte Gregori ora pro me*, that is, *Holy Gregory pray for me*; which the Hangman hearing, with open mouth swore this damnable Oath, Gods Wounds, *see his heart is in my hand, and Gregory in his mouth*. *Oh Egreious Papist*: Thus the afflicted Martyr, even to the last of his Torments, cryed for the Aye and succour of Saints; and especially of Saint *Gregory*, his devoted Patron, and our Countreys Apostle; that by his Intercession, he might pass the sharpness of his Torment: but now behold a Miracle; among many Protestants that came to view the body when it was quartered, there were many Catholicks also; and among the rest, a Virgin who had wholly Dedicated her self to the service of God; she being desirous to be partaker of so great a merit, and to get (if possible) some little part or parcel of his sacred Flesh, or Guiltless Blood poured on the Ground, to keep as a perpetual Relique, for her private Devotion, used all diligence to draw near to the Gibbet, that she might obtain her desire; but seeing her self frustrated of all in that kind, through the Press of People, and also through the danger of being discovered; Devotion being her Guide, she followed her Quarters, as they were drawn back again to be boyled at *New-gate*, hoping there at last to touch

them, before they were dispersed to Hang on the Gates of the City, being as it were in despair of any greater benefit, and coming to the Prison, the people Flocked together to behold the fresh bleeding Quarters according to their wonted Custom, when any such thing is to be seen, before they were carried up to boyling, desiring the Executioner to shew them piece by piece, that so their Curiosity might give Censure as they said, whether he was fat or lean, black or fair to satisfy their request: by Chance, Bull the Hangman took up one of his fore quarters by the Arm, which when he had shewed the people, he Contemptuously flung it down into the basket again where it lay, and took up the Head that they might see his face; and as God would have it, both Arm & Hand of the foresaid Quarter hung out over the sides of the basket, which the said Virgin espying threw near to touch it; and approaching wistfully with fear lest any should take notice of her so doing, having a determination and vehement desire to touch his Holy and Anointed Thumb, which then appeared next her, if it were possible, and because it was a part of his hand, which so often had Elevated the Immaculate Body of our Blessed Saviour Jesus Christ, she purposed not to leave it unhanded for her ill luck well: this her determination and purpose she presently performed, and taking the Thumb in her hand, by the instinct of Almighty God, she gave it a little pull only, to shew her love & desire of having it: the Sequel was Miraculous, for behold, she not imagining any such matter would have followed, by the Divine power, the Thumb was instantly loosed from his hand; and being separated, she carried it away safely, both flesh, skin, and bone, without sight of any, to her great Joy and Admiration. O the strange and miraculous separation! O Benefit, past all requital! the Thumb of a man newly Dead and Quartered, to depart from the hand, as it were *Sua sponte* of its own accord, to pleasure a friend that loved him so entirely, and that in the midst of so many hundreds of People of a different Religion, yet not espied by any; No not by Squire Bull the Hangman, who never mist the Thumb from that day to this. But the strangeness thereof I leave to your pious considerations, confessing my self altogether unworthy, and not any way able to explicate the worthiness of the same. This young Gentlewoman, presently upon this miraculous Purchase, having fully resolved to forsake the Vanities of this World; and especially this our troublesome Country, went not long after beyond the Seas, carrying with her this precious Relique, which she much esteemed; There she Devoted her self to St. Augustine, and is since become a Venerable Nun, of the same Order. Afterward she hearing of this Martyr's own Brother to live in the Seminary at Doway, sent him for a token a little piece of the same Thumb, inclosed in a Letter written with her own hand, protesting the Verity of all the foresaid Narration.

Printed at St. Omers by Charles Boscard with this Approbation in Latin, but truly Englished.

The Life of this Saint, and most constant Martyr and Priest, (whose Sufferings did much increase the Glory of his Combat, which are truly related in this little Book) is worthy to be Printed, that those who behold his End, may imitate the Faith of his Conversation.

St. Omers, Febr. 10.

John Redmayn, S. Th. D.
Licen'cr of Books.

But a few Words of this our Blessed Martyr's The Vision he saw, did most truly represent the Practice of that bloody Church of Rome, in destroying the Innocent and Unarmed: and their drawing their Swords to defend their Priest in saying Mass. (by the Example of St. Peter) shews, that they had forgot our Saviours Command to St. Peter thereupon, to put up his Sword into its Sheath, since most of the Murders, Massacres, Desolations, Fires, Wars, and Devastations, that have been in Europe, since that Man of Sin appeared in the World, have been either suggested or promoted by the Pope, and his cursed Instruments: And if God Almighty had not wonderfully prevented it, Coleman's Reformation would ere this, have made us fully experience the Truth hereof. But for the Thumb, what shall we say? The Author is also used as it, and so may all that read it, so think of the Impudence of the Man, who durst so manifestly offend the Understanding of Mankind, to publish and impose such false and monstrous Untruths and Absurdities upon the Minds of Men; that certainly, none but a Papist, can read it without blushing; and is fit only to be answered in the Words of the Prophet, What shall be given unto thee? Or, What shall be done unto thee, thou false Tongue, and Pen?

To conclude; Let us think no Cost, no Pains, nay, not every drop of Blood in our Bodies, ill spent, to prevent this false, this bloody, this senseless and ridiculous Religion, ever to enslave us, and our Posterity: And let us all Conclude with that Prayer in the Old Liturgy, From the Pope of Rome, and all his detestable Enormities, Good Lord deliver us.

A M E N.